



March 29, 2006

Dear Community Friends;

Emergency Preparedness In Southeast

This past Monday's Seattle Times contained an article titled "Ready for Disaster? Not Yet." (Seattle Times, March 27, 2006, Section B1) This article highlighted residential emergency preparedness in certain neighborhoods.

The Seattle Disaster Aid and Response Team (SDART) program has been the city's principle vehicle to educate residents about emergency preparedness. The program informs neighbors how to mitigate the effects of a disaster – such as an earthquake – and how to form response teams with other neighbors to help survive and cope with the aftermath of the disaster.

Of the approximately 460 neighborhood disaster response teams in the City, most are in North Seattle, in some of our more affluent communities. In Southeast Seattle, very few residents are involved in the SDART program. This article implies that South Seattle residents are not as prepared to deal with emergencies as the rest of the city.

I don't know about you, but I take this as a personal challenge.

If you are on the distribution list for this email, you most likely are participating in block watch. If you already have a block watch, forming a neighborhood disaster response plan with neighbors is a natural extension of what you are already doing. If your block watch hasn't done this yet, then let's get together and make it happen.

It is not difficult and it is not daunting. It does require that you get together with your neighbors. Block Watch asks you to watch out for each other and keep an eye out for suspicious activity.

Forming a neighborhood disaster response team requires that you agree to assist each other during and following a disaster. Emergency preparedness also requires that you do something for yourself and your family. If your block is not ready to form disaster response teams, then start with individual and family preparedness.

- Look at how you can mitigate the effects of a disaster at home.
- Develop a communication plan so that in the event of an emergency, every member of your household knows how to get in touch with each other if they are separated.
- Put together an emergency kit with food, water, clothing, and other supplies that can sustain you for 72 hours in the event you lose power, your water supply is disrupted, or you need to evacuate your home.

Emergency Preparedness Resources

The following websites offer extremely helpful information about individual, family and workplace emergency preparedness:

www.seattle.gov/emergency_mgt/
www.ready.gov
www.seattleredcross.org

The Red Cross also has materials available in languages other than English. These can be downloaded in PDF format and printed out for distribution to your neighbors that may not have English as their primary language.

The Times' article threw down a challenge to all of us who live and work in Southeast Seattle. Let's answer that challenge and show the rest of the city the organized strength of our communities, that Southeast is indeed "Ready for Disaster." Let's get started. Call me at 206.386.9766.

Until next time, Take Care and Stay Safe!

Mark Solomon, South Precinct Crime Prevention